

Pre-reading/Post-reading: How can I peak their interest in the lesson or extend the lesson?

The value line: Students align themselves physically on a line from agree to disagree according to their responses to value questions. Good for pre-reading. (0 - 10 spectrum)

Drive By Internet Search: Give students 5-10 minutes to search internet for concept/topic areas covered in reading OR prior to reading. Share what you've learned. Or bring in the website(s) and brief annotation of how it is useful. A side benefit is that students get more efficient with their searching as they do this throughout the year.

Research: Have students research a novel or time period or setting prior to reading. Come to class ready to share what you've learned. Or bring in the website(s) and brief annotation of how it is useful.

White Boards: Myriad of uses: review/preview/writing exercises/team sharing/round-robins

Back to Back: Student sits with a partner back to back. Teacher asks a question (trivia if this is pre-reading OR objective review question if this is for review). Students write their responses. Then they check. If their answers correctly match, they get a team point. If not, no point. See which team wins the most points!

Stand alone Group Project: Teacher gives student groups of 4 different topics to explore prior to beginning a new chapter or text. Students quickly research and then prepare a presentation that can "stand alone". Usually presentations take 5 minutes or less to "consume". To conclude, groups rotate through each station learning the new concepts. Visiting groups should leave feedback (in form of sticky notes, writing on a big sheet of paper, or a todaysmeet.com "room".) Usually this sort of project takes 1 full class period (75 min.)

In-class writing: This can be a good way to test students' knowledge on the spot and without outside help. With or without notes.

- a) Sometimes broad prompts (from AP or IB FRQ's)
- b) Quote/segment from the text itself and asking students to place it in context and then reflect on its significance to course/unit themes.
- c) 5" essays - give a prompt and a notecard to each student - they have 5 minutes to write a THESIS and their supports. Students then rotate them in groups and silently read then share. This REALLY helped with training them to plan their essays quickly.

Wiki/BLOG Discussion: Teacher poses a general thought question on the wiki. Students respond to the prompt AND to one another's ideas PRIOR to class. This out of class work can then lead to an in-class discussion or support for written essays.

Group Keynote: Group creates a Keynote/Powerpoint featuring the section assigned to you. Use textbook and internet and databases to do preliminary research on your topic. Presentation skills perfected. Final slide should be credits for sources and creators of the keynote. Divide labor and then put it all together.

Student Teaching: Have students create an outline of a lecture they would give if they were the teacher based on the reading they did.

Agree/Disagree: There is a writing exercise that can be used called TWEDYADWTS. This stands for "To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?" You can take quotes or statements from the time period or directly from the text. The kids have to create a thesis statement, introductory paragraph and 2-3 facts to support their position. They can be read out loud to the class and critiqued. The trick is keeping it short, but it is an excellent writing exercise that I wish I could take credit for.

Mini-documentary: Students take their section of reading and create a short documentary. They need to write a script and choose appropriate visuals.

K-W-L: What you KNOW, What you WANT to know, What you LEARNED (3 columns)

How can my students process what they have been reading (or a major concept) to understand it with more depth?

10 and 2: After 10 minutes of lecture (or reading) give your students a break. Many different types of "breaks" are out there: think-pair-share, today'smeet.com discussion, draw what you "saw", act out, hot-potato, other Kagan strategies. . .

Silent Discussion: Teacher puts on a statement on the board - something thoughtful, philosophical, and with inherent dissonance. Students come to the board and write their responses silently. They can thread ideas off of each other. They can come to the board as much as they like. They must remain SILENT the whole time. In the end, the discussion can just end or be debriefed verbally with teacher guidance.

Back Channel Discussion: Can be a variation on silent discussion, just using www.todaysmeet.com or another back channel free provider. This is more linear (bad) but recordable (good). This is also useful to use DURING MOVIES to see what students are thinking (connections, questions, responses to others, predictions, commentary on acting, directing, lighting, plot variations, etc.)

Fishbowl: 1/2 the class takes seats in the center circle. 1/2 the class sits in the outer circle. Those on the inside discuss the reading or major concept for the day. They DISCUSS. Those on the outside OBSERVE a) the interactions of the discussion group. (What makes the discussion effective or ineffective? Did anyone get left out? Did anyone lead? Did they get into enough depth or just flit around? Was anyone interrupting?) b) what do you WISH you could have said?

By the end, the outer circle gets its turn to respond with their observations. The outer circle COULD use Back Channel to take their notes and to have their own private group discussion! Also, if you use an observation rubric, each person on the outside could be observing one person on the inside, thus providing feedback to the student and/or teacher.

Note: It works best when students know that fishbowl will happen and that they will be in the inner circle. I encourage them to mark their text with annotations and good quotes to bring up during discussion. They should come with their own questions. Encourage students to make text-to-text connections, text-to-self, challenge/defend/qualify others' comments.

Note on assessment: I've found it useful as a teacher to record student involvement using this key: R = response C = asked for clarification Q = posed a question I=interrupted SUPERSSCRIPTS: + = great insight! - = wrong/misinterpreted/detracting CIRCLE any response where the novel has been quoted as evidence.

In-class writing: This can be a good way to test students' knowledge on the spot and without outside help. With or without notes. With or without the novel. You choose.

- a) Sometimes broad prompts (from AP or IB FRQ's) are nice.
- b) Other times take a quote from the text itself and asking students to place it in context and then reflect on its significance to the text.
- c) Another approach is to ask students to discuss how a character or theme or plot connects to another work/movie that they know (looking for archetypes)

Group writing: Using Google Docs, students can write an in-class piece together as a small group. This is good for writing early in the year or particularly difficult texts when students need to lean on one another more.

Who would you cast? They've been reading a novel. In small groups have students decide which movie stars would make the best combination of casting to play the lead (and minor) roles. Use the internet to find their pictures and create a quick Keynote to present to the class, along with their oral explanations of WHY those actors are best.

Wiki Discussion: Teacher poses a general thought question on the wiki. Students respond to the prompt AND to one another's ideas PRIOR to class. This out of class work can then lead to an in-class discussion or support for written essays.

Class Database of Notes: Cycle responsibility through the class to create one large Google Doc of notes from each day's discussion. Could be useful for students when it is time to study, will improve their listening and notetaking skills (to have an audience) and could be used as an artifact in a portfolio.

How can my students show they are prepared for class?

Sticky Note Annotations: This can be fashioned in any number of ways, but the gist is that while students read they mark their thoughts on sticky notes and place them on the

page. They can then use these to guide their questions and discussion during class. They can also be collected on a sheet of paper by the teacher for assessment purposes. In this case, it is best for students to include the Page the note pertains to. If guided students can be instructed to write notes on: predictions, connections, vocabulary, themes, literary devices being used, summaries, questions.

2/3 Quiz: Pick three terms from the previous night's reading and write them on the board. The students then choose two of the three (thus the name 2/3rds Quiz) and define and explain the significance of each. This works well because they're easy to develop, easy to grade (check, check plus, check minus, or zero is a basic rubric), and they provide a motive for the students to do their reading. Also, discussing their answers can lead to a review or opening discussion, depending on your pacing.

Key passages: Have students choose 3 - 5 key passages from their reading and mark them as they read. Once in class, choose randomly or have another student choose for them or they choose one of theirs for another student. Then have the student use the passage(s) and write about its significance on a notecard (or type it, or write it out on lined paper, or present their thoughts orally to the class).

Notes: just what you expect! Take notes. Or teach Cornell notetaking or mindmapping or any other notetaking technique. . .

Connection chart: Objective is that students make connections as they read and prepare for class. Text to text, text to life, text to another class's content. *What I'm reading reminds me of.* . .

The Bucket of Glory or Doom: Draw student names from a bucket. (Another great way to take roll is that they put their own name in the bucket!) The lucky student is asked a question relating to last night's homework. The question should be geared to get a discussion going. The student can look back at their notes or "phone a friend." They have about a minute to come up with the answer. Can be used as either a participation grade or bonus points, either way works.

Entrance/Exit tickets: Simple concept - they need to answer a question to get in or get out

Fitting Song or Lyric: Best if used after a chunk of a novel has been read. Come with a song and its lyrics (or just instrumental song for mood). Be ready to explain to the class how the song fits the reading. This can be used as a final assessment if it is expanded into a soundtrack for the novel.

Drawing: Draw in pencil (or ink, etc.) your concept of WHATEVER (a specific scene, character, setting, conflict, plot line). Write or speak an explanation of your work.

Questions: Come to class with questions for your classmates and teacher over the reading for the day.

Artifact AKA “Show and Tell”: Bring in an artifact representing a significant concept, character, scene, theme, etc. Show the artifact to the class and give an oral explanation as if you are the character, narrator, or author.

Rotating Review: Big poster paper up with the main concepts from the unit (or chapter). Students rotate and write key people/ideas/dates/etc...they think of under that topic. Give 2 minutes at each then rotate and add to what has been written. Can also be used as a PREVIEW to a unit (prior knowledge)

Lightning Debates: I like to set up mini-debates; take information they have been learning and give them 10 minutes as a team to come up with strongest arguments, counter-argument possibilities and an opening statement.

Wordle.net: A good wrap up to a chapter or short story or poem. Using www.wordle.net students choose the specific color, layout, font, etc. to most accurately reflect the ideas and mood of the piece. This is about VISUAL DESIGN.

Different ways to review?

Class Matching: Teacher creates big note cards of major concepts/ideas/authors/characters that can be MATCHED. Then the class as a whole works to get everything matched correctly. Round 1: Each student in turn can approach the board and make one match. Round 2: Each student in turn can approach the board and change anything they feel needs to be corrected. After 2 rounds, the teacher checks accuracy.

How can we conclude a unit?

Discuss together “Literature shows us that. . . “ Could be a GRASPS or a distillment of the unit into a single phrase the class comes up with. Put it in the wall and build the wall sayings as the year unfolds.

Use the **enduring understandings** as a final assessment jumping off point.

In some way have students show their growing understanding of the **connections** between this literature and all other literature they know (common themes, archetypes, symbols, etc. - Think How to Read Literature Like a Professor)

Essay: Ye olde literary analysis etc.

Sociogram: Good for a group project. Students take a main character and create a large poster including a depiction of the character in the middle, best quotes accompanied by character traits, symbols related to the character, and relationships with other characters around him/her. Anything RELATIONAL should be located visually

near the character if close and farther away if distant. Size of the elements on the poster should also be indicative of how IMPORTANT the element is to the character.

GRASPS: A semi-authentic project in which the student plays a ROLE.

- **Vodcast:** Student makes a video podcast to use voice and visuals to accomplish a unit goal.
- **Screencast:** Student uses a free screencast website/download to create voice overs while examining a pdf or pages document. Can be done with Quicktime, too!
- **Keynote or Prezi:** Student uses keynote (powerpoint) or Prezi to present to the imagined audience on a unit goal.
- **Portfolio:** Student creates a portfolio of their writings with an overall writing reflection, overall reading reflection, term goal(s) and evaluation of previous goals, and any other artifacts that will demonstrate learning and growth. Using GRASPS assignments is a good idea.
- **Dinner Party (Fishbowl in character):** Host a dinner party where students come in character (pre-assigned). Dress the part, bring good “one-liners” to use during dinner discussion and end with a TOAST! Use the fishbowl rubric and peer observation sheet. To make it real interesting, have the students bring in food to eat at the SET TABLE. Teacher should play a role as well!

How can we extend our learning? During or after a unit?

Found poem: While reading a unit, novel, or chapter, students pay close attention to words, phrases, and language in general. Keep a log of interesting words/phrases/sentences. Finally, create a found poem either on-topic or off-topic. It gets students paying attention to writing style and then lets them be creative while improving poetry writing skills.